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Carlyle As A Critic Of Schiller.

CARLYLE AS A CRITIC OF SCHILLER

BY

ETHEL LOUISE O'CONNOR

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Ethel Louise O'Connor

ENTITLED Carlyle as a Critic of Schiller

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Julia Fochi
In Charge of Thesis

Julia Fochi
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:*

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Committee

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INTRODUCTION

A common world literature was the dream of the great poet Goethe. During the closing years of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, many kindred spirits in Germany and elsewhere were actuated by the same vision, and looked to him as a source of inspiration. Few lived to see their dreams realized, yet they were able to mark the progress of their ideas. Among this number was Carlyle, the first great interpreter of German thought to the English people.

Before considering Carlyle's treatment of Schiller, it will be necessary to take some preliminary notice of his relation to the German movement in England as a whole. An understanding not only of the ignorance, but of the prejudice and indifference of the English people toward German literature is necessary to realize the significance of Carlyle's efforts to make the names of Schiller and Goethe known to his countrymen.

Isolated by her geographic position and naturally independent, England had been less susceptible to foreign influence than perhaps any other nation. Aside from the French, which Streuli says was imported "mit blindem Eifer", the English knew little of other literatures. For the German language and literature there was practically no enthusiasm; on the contrary, they were held in the utmost contempt. "Die Engländer verachteten die deutsche Sprache", says Streuli, "nannten sie ungelenk, rauh und arm.... auf deutsche Bücher hielten man wenig, man betrachtete sie

als pedantisch, allzu gelehrt und geschmacklos."¹ As a result, up until the time of William Taylor of Norwich, German literature was practically unknown in England. There were very few translations and many of these were either works of lesser writers or mutilated versions from the French. The first began to appear in the sixties. In 1762 translations of Gessner's "Idyllen" and of his "Tod Abels" were published. These were followed a year later by a version of Klopstock's "Messias" and in 1767 by Bodner's "Noachide". There were versions of Wieland in 1771 and in 1773. To the latter year belongs also Lessing's Fables, which was followed in 1781 by a prose version of "Nathan der Weise" and in 1786 by the production on the stage of "Minna von Barnhelm" as "The Disbanded Officer". The first translation of "Werthers Leiden" was from the French and did not appear until 1779. It was ten years later before Schiller became known, and by this time the influence of William Taylor and his contemporaries was beginning to be felt. "Die Räuber", the first of Schiller's works to be translated, made its appearance in 1792. It was followed in 1795 by "Kabale und Liebe", in 1796 by "Fiesco", in 1798 by "Don Karlos", and the "Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges" in 1799. The last was translated by Sir Walter Scott and it was succeeded in 1800 by Coleridge's translation of "Wallenstein".²

1. William Streuli - "Thomas Carlyle als Vermittler Deutscher Literatur und Deutschen Geistes" - 7.

2. William Streuli - "Thomas Carlyle als Vermittler Deutscher Literatur und Deutschen Geistes" - 6.

F. W. Roe - "Thomas Carlyle as a Critic of Literature" - 90.

In the thirty years immediately preceding Carlyle's activities as a German critic, more enthusiasm was evinced than in the earlier period, although it was not at all commensurate with what it should have been, for this was one of the most productive periods in English literature. Although his contemporaries were men of far greater ability and better equipped for the purpose, William Taylor was the only English writer before Carlyle to attempt a comprehensive study of German literature. He wrote the first versified version of "Nathan" in 1791 and also published the first translation of "Iphigenia" in 1793. For twenty-five years he was a contributor to the "Monthly Magazine" and "Monthly Review", a large number of his articles being on the German language and literature. These were subsequently collected and published in three volumes as "The Historic Survey of German Poetry", which F. W. Roe designates as "the most important representative of English opinions on German literature prior to Carlyle".¹ Taylor, however, was a critic of very mediocre ability and many of his criticisms are absurdly erroneous; as for instance his blind worship of Kotzebue, to whom he devoted a tenth part of the entire Survey, while on the other hand he almost neglected even to mention such writers as Hans Sachs, Jean Paul Richter, Zacharias Werner and Novalis.² Of Taylor's contemporaries, Henry Crabbe Robinson is noteworthy as one of the earliest admirers of Schiller and Goethe. He travelled widely in Germany and met Goethe, Schil-

1. F. W. Roe - "Carlyle as a Critic of Literature" - 92.

2. See Carlyle's criticism, "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays," II - 333.

ler, Kotzebus and Wieland personally. His reviews, however, were of comparatively little value, and, according to Roe, it was rather what he talked than what he wrote that made his influence of importance.¹ Among these early enthusiasts Walter Scott also finds a place. He was much interested in Goethe, Bürger, and the writers of the Romantic School, but aside from several translations from Goethe and Schiller, he did little to advance the movement. Coleridge, perhaps more than any other of the writers who immediately preceded Carlyle, possessed the genius to do what the younger critic did twenty years later. Coleridge was not only a man of great intellectual power, but he had travelled in Germany and had studied extensively in German literature and philosophy. However, with the exception of these two rather remarkable translations of Schiller's "Piccolomini" and "Wallenstein's Tod", he did nothing to carry out the gigantic plans on which he was so fond of discoursing. De Quincy possessed the genius and the necessary knowledge of German, but his efforts like those of Coleridge were few and without aim. He was especially interested in Jean Paul Richter and to him belongs the distinction of first introducing Jean Paul's works to the English public. Such was the attitude of Carlyle's contemporaries.

Of the periodicals a few words will suffice. Here is found a like indifference and prejudice. During the first thirty years of the century the "Edinburgh" held itself entirely aloof from German influence, sneering at the crudeness and "barbarity" of the German writers. Faust was designated as a "monster in literature". The "Blackwood's" was more kindly disposed because of

I. F. W. Roe's "Carlyle as a Critic of Literature" - 94.

the early connection of Lockhart, who had traveled in Germany and there imbibed a love for German literature. However, as its criticisms were so tinctured with antagonism to the "Edinburgh Review" and as its translations were largely of the writers of the Romantic school, "Blackwood's" did little to promote the best in German literature. The other leading periodical of the time, the "Quarterly Review", took the middle ground of absolute indifference. It neither took the trouble to oppose or favor, and from 1809 to 1831 published only three articles relating to this subject.

This briefly summarizes the attitude of the English people toward German thought at the beginning of the century. The ignorance and prejudice of the public, the indifference of literary men, and the open hostility on the part of the periodicals had yet to be overcome. Under such conditions Carlyle, the first great interpreter and critic of German literature, began his work. That he was keenly aware of the difficulties of the situation is evident from his letters and the preface of his translation of "Wilhelm Meister", where he says, "Our translators are unfortunate in their selection or execution, or the public is tasteless and absurd in its demands; for with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected, and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us".¹ Carlyle, differing from his predecessors, set to his task with an end in view. He realized that his countrymen had based their conclusions on a false premise. "If any man will insist on taking

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Wilhelm Meister", Preface to first edition,
I - 3.

Heine's Ardinghello and Miller's Siegwart, and the works of Veit Weber the Younger, and, above all, the everlasting Kotzebue, as his specimens of German literature", he says in his State of German Literature, "he may establish many things."¹ Carlyle's purpose was to dethrone Kotzebue and his followers and to create in the English mind an adequate appreciation of the real leaders of German literature.

Carlyle's contributions as a critic are immense and cover nearly the entire field of German literature. Up until 1839 out of the separate titles of thirty-four essays, half are on German subjects; and to these must be added his "Life of Schiller", "Wilhelm Meister", the "German Romance", and several articles now included in appendices. From 1821 to 1832 were the years of his greatest activity, especially from 1827 on, when he was so intimately connected with Goethe. Carlyle began his criticisms in 1821 with an appreciation of Faust, which was followed from 1823-24 by the "Life of Schiller", and in 1824 by his translation of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre", which had made a profound impression upon him. No important work appears again until 1827, when the "German Romance" was published, a collection of eleven essays on Tieck, Hoffman, Richter, Fouque, and Musäus. To the same year belongs "The State of German Literature" and "Jean Paul". The year 1828 was also productive, resulting in "The Life and Writings of Werner", "The Life of Heine", "Goethe's Helena", and "Goethe". "German Playwrights" and an appreciation of Novalis were published

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays", I - 37.

in 1829. The only publication of the following year was a second article on Jean Paul. Carlyle had also completed a "History of German Literature", but owing to the unpopularity of the subject, was unable to find a publisher. A second article on Schiller appeared in 1831, and also the essays, "The Nibelungenlied", "German Literature of the XIV and XV Centuries", "Luther's Psalm", and a review of William Taylor's "Historical Survey of German Poetry". These were very fittingly followed in 1832, the year of Goethe's death, by "Goethe's Works" and the translations of Goethe's "Nouvelles" and "Märchen". This was practically the close of Carlyle's active work as a German critic, although his influence was to last for years to come.

It is not our purpose, however, to dwell on Carlyle's relation to the German movement as a whole, although a knowledge of it is necessary for an understanding of his position as a critic of German literature. The lack of literary appreciation of Schiller in England as well as of German literature in general has already been mentioned. As it is the purpose of this paper to treat of Carlyle as a critic of Schiller, it is well before entering upon the main discussion to consider briefly the appreciation of Schiller in Germany before 1825. Throughout the poet's lifetime there had been an ebb and flow of Schiller-enthusiasm, even in his later years after his association with Goethe. His death, however, was mourned as a national loss. "In diesem Toten", says Albert Ludwig, "betrauerte man den Sohn der Zeit und ihren Schöpfer, den echtesten Vertreter der Bildung der ganzen Epoche".¹ A countless mass of

1. Albert Ludwig - "Schiller und die deutsche Nachwelt" - 19.

"Totenfeier"-poetry was written in his honor, Zelter set a number of his lyrics to music, and Goethe wrote his "Epilog zu Schillers Glocke". The time was ripe for a biography, but none was written. There were numerous magazine articles relating to his life and works, but these were for the most part unauthentic and unsatisfactory.

Schiller's popularity, however, was not of long durance. At the beginning of the century the Romantic movement had been founded. At first Schiller's literary principles had coincided with those of the Schlegels, but finally, as a result of the excesses to which the movement was carried, the Romanticists turned against Schiller. Consequently until 1830-40 there was almost a dearth of Schiller literature in Germany. The first edition of Schiller's collected works was made by Körner from 1812-15, seven years after the poet's death. Moreover, it was not until 1822, a year before Carlyle commenced his Life, that Heinrich Döring published the first German biography of Schiller. Eight years elapsed before Caroline von Wolzogen published her "Schillers Leben", and it was not until 1859 that "Das Schiller Buch" by Wurzbach made its appearance.

Thus Carlyle's distinction is a two-fold one. To him belongs not only the credit of being the first English critic who really interpreted the German literature to the English people, but he was likewise a pioneer in the field of Schiller-criticism.

Chapter I

CARLYLE'S EARLY ENTHUSIASM FOR SCHILLER; "THE LIFE OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER"

When one considers the hostile attitude of the English literary world at the beginning of the nineteenth century to German literature in general, and in Germany itself not only the indifference but the lack of literary criticism of one of her greatest poets - it seems all the more remarkable that Carlyle's first work as a critic of German literature should have been a "Life of Schiller". His letters, which are the only available source of information, point to an early interest in the German poet. The first reference to his study of German occurs in a letter to Robert Mitchell in February, 1819, where he speaks of a "slight tincture of German language" which he is "receiving from one Robert Jardin of Göttingen in return for an equally slight tincture of French".¹ In the following month he writes to his brother Alexander that he is "still at the German" and can now read books with the help of a dictionary.² No further reference is found until two years later when he mentions in another letter to his brother a translation of a portion of Schiller's "Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges", which he had just finished and sent to the publishers.³ However, this translation was probably not published as it does not appear among Carlyle's collected works or in his

1. C. E. Norton - "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - I - 209.

2. Ibid. - I - 227.

3. Ibid. - I - 311.

bibliographia. The reference serves merely as a proof of his early interest in Schiller. Two months later in a letter to Robert Mitchell a far more conclusive passage occurs: "The colossal Wallenstein with Thekla the angelical and Max her impetuous lofty-minded lover, are all gone to rest; I have closed Schiller for a night."¹

His letters to Jane Welsh during this period likewise give indications of the Schiller-enthusiast. In September, 1821, he writes "I still entertain a firm trust that you are to read Schiller and Goethe with me in October".² In a letter of the following year appears a comment on "Wilhelm Tell", which bespeaks the critic as well as the enthusiast. "In the meantime" he writes to Jane, "I have sent you Tell and the Bride of Messina. - - - I was disappointed in Tell; it struck me as too disjointed and heterogeneous, tho' there are excellent views of Swiss life in it; and Tell himself is a fine patriot-peasant". A second reference to "Wallenstein" also appears in the same letter. "You did well to cry so heartily over Wallenstein", he says, "I like it the best of any in the series".³ In April, 1823, as he was finishing Part One of the "Life of Schiller", he writes to Jane that as she is "so fond of tears" he has sent her a fresh supply of Schiller. "His Kabale und Liebe will make you cry your fill", Carlyle writes, "That Ferdinand with his Du Louise und ich und die Liebe is a fine youth; I liked him well."⁴ These references, although few in number, are valuable as indications of Carlyle's early enthusiasm

1. C. E. Norton, "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - I - 332.

2. Ibid. I - 370.

3. Ibid. II - 156.

4. Ibid. II - 191.

for Schiller, which led him finally in 1823 to undertake his "Life of Schiller".

This biography is the only work relating to Schiller which we have from the youthful Carlyle, and hence it is of great importance as an expression of his early idea of the great German poet. It was first published in serial form in the "London Magazine". In 1822 Carlyle was asked to write a series of essays for this magazine entitled "Portraits of Men of Genius and Character." The offer was accepted and Schiller was chosen as the subject of his first essay. The article was published in three parts: Part I, later published as "Schiller's Youth", appeared in October, 1823, under the title "Schiller's Life and Writings"; Part II, "From Schiller's Settlement at Mannheim to his Settlement at Jena" in January, 1824, and Part III, "From his Settlement at Jena to his Death" in the July, August, and September numbers of the same year.

In 1825 the separate articles were collected and published in book form as "The life of Friedrich Schiller, comprehending an Examination of his Works". In a letter to John A. Carlyle a few weeks before its publication, Carlyle describes this volume in his characteristic manner: "On the whole it is going to be a very pitiful but yet not utterly worthless thing; a volume of three hundred and fifty pages, with portrait, extracts, etc.; not well printed, worse written, yet on the whole containing nothing that I did not reckon true and wanting nothing which my scanty and forlorn circumstances allowed me to give it. So I commit it silently 'either to everlasting time or to everlasting oblivion'".¹

In 1830 an unexpected and unusual distinction was conferred upon Carlyle when "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" appeared in translation with an introduction by Goethe. The volume also contained four prints - Schiller's home at Weimar, his garden-house over the Leutra Brook at Jena, and two drawings of Carlyle's home at Dumfries, Scotland. In the preface Goethe expresses his admiration for Carlyle's tireless efforts to establish German literature in England. It is now a time, says Goethe, when men talk of a common world literature, and when literature as well as commerce is establishing a unity among nations. It is not that Carlyle establishes anything new concerning Schiller, but that which in Goethe's mind is to the honor of Schiller and every other German is "unmittelbar zu erfahren, wie ein zartfühlender, strebsamer, einsichtiger Mann über dem Meere, in seinen besten Jahren, durch Schiller's Productionen berührt, bewegt, erregt und nun zum weitern Studium der deutschen Literatur angetrieben worden". "Mir wenigstens war es rührend" he continues, "zu sehen, wie dieser, rein und ruhig denkende Fremde, selbst in jenen ersten, oft harten, fast rohen Productionen unseres verewigten Freundes, immer den edlen, wohldenkenden, wohlwollenden Mann gewahr ward und sich ein Ideal des vortrefflichsten Sterbenden an ihm auferbauen konnte".¹

It is likewise interesting to note that the first American reprint of "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" appeared in 1833 in Boston. Aside from the biography itself, it contained a general preface by Park Benjamin and an introduction by Professor Charles Follen of Harvard University. Professor Follen praises the uni-

1. Thomas Carlyle, "The Life of Friedrich Schiller", Appendix II, page 336.

versal viewpoint, from which Carlyle considers his subject. The work itself he characterizes as a biography in the true sense of the word; more than a mere recital of events or description of character, it is a critical analysis of a great man's work. He ranks it as one of the finest specimens of English criticism.

In 1845, twenty years after its first publication, Carlyle published the Second Edition - to prevent its being reprinted by "certain parties of the pirate species" he explains in the preface. He compares it here rather humorously to one of those horses which "a judicious owner, on a fair survey of them, might prefer to adjust by at once shooting through the head". In the case of books, however, such a remedy is not possible. In closing he goes on to remark, "The present little Book is very imperfect; - but it pretends also to be very harmless; it can innocently instruct those who are more ignorant than itself".¹ Later, on its reprint in the "People's Edition", Carlyle was requested to add sixty or seventy pages, an addition which he was enabled to make by the incorporation of Herr Saupe's then recently published "Schiller and his Father's Household".

For the present treatment of Carlyle's "Life of Schiller" the biographical facts are in themselves of secondary interest. It is rather the relation which Carlyle traces between them and the poet's works, what he thought of Schiller's poetry and prose, and where he ranked him as a dramatist and a poet that is of primary concern. As in the majority of his "Miscellaneous Essays" Carlyle uses in the "Life of Schiller" the biographical method of

1. Thomas Carlyle, "The Life of Friedrich Schiller", Preface to the Second Edition, XIII-XIV.

criticism. He felt that an author's work could neither be appreciated nor interpreted unless considered in its relation to the author himself. "We are anxious to know" he says in his introduction to the "Life", "how so great a man passed through the world, how he lived, and moved, and had his being. - - - It would be interesting to discover by what gifts and what employment of them he reached the eminence on which we now see him; to follow the steps of his intellectual and moral culture; to gather from his life and works some picture of himself. It is worth inquiring, whether he who could represent noble actions so well, did himself act nobly; how those powers of intellect, which in philosophy and art achieved so much, applied themselves to the everyday emergencies of life; how the generous ardour, which delights us in his poetry, displayed itself in the common intercourse between man and man. It would at once instruct and gratify us if we could understand him thoroughly, could transport ourselves into his circumstances outward and inward, could see as he saw, and feel as he felt".¹

In Part One, which embraces the period from 1759 to 1784, Carlyle treats of the youthful Schiller and his three early dramas. The critic speaks very briefly and sympathetically of the poet's early life - of the refinement and "native worth" of his parents, of the quiet influence of Pastor Moser and of Schiller's school-days at Ludwigsburg, where he first became interested in the theatre. The poet's life at Stuttgart is pictured with as much resentment as we would expect from a German biographer. "The

1. Thomas Carlyle, "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 2.

Stuttgart system of education seems to have been formed on the principles, not of cherishing and correcting nature, but of rooting it out, and supplying its place with something better", says Carlyle.¹ He realizes, however, the deep significance of this early experience for the coming poet, when he adds later that there seems to be no doubt that, but for the perverted discipline of Stuttgart, Schiller would never have written "Die Räuber". Carlyle sees in "Die Räuber" the expression of that "burning energy of soul", which he felt to be so distinctive of Schiller's character. He can trace the circumstances under which the drama was composed in all its parts. In its rude simplicity and gloomy overpowering force he sees the "defective cultivation" as well as the "harassed feelings of its author". Karl von Moor is to him an epitome of Schiller himself.

Carlyle realized, however, that "Die Räuber" was the work of an inexperienced enthusiast and that Schiller knew life only as he had studied it in books. Franz, says Carlyle, is "too reflective a miscreant - his very reflections if nothing else would have led him to honesty";² Amelia is a "fair vision, the beau ideal of a poet's first mistress", but lacking in mortal lineaments;³ the father is "a weak and fond old man" and the banditti are fearfully exaggerated.⁴ Schiller's skill in the art of composition is superior to his knowledge of the world; his style is partly of a kind with the incidents and feelings which it represents - "strong and astonishing and sometimes wildly grand; but likewise inartificial,

1. Thomas Carlyle, "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 9.

2. Ibid. - 16.

3. Ibid. - 17.

4. Ibid. - 17.

coarse and grotesque".¹

Carlyle, however, differing from many of his contemporaries sees beyond the faults and excrescences of the drama. The overpowering emotional force of "Die Räuber" overshadows its defects. "It is vain that we rebel against the inconsistencies and crudities of the work" says our critic. "Its faults are redeemed by the living energy that pervades it".² The theory that Schiller had injured the cause of morality through the publication of "Die Räuber" he considers scarcely worthy of contradiction. "None but a candidate for Bedlam as well as Tyburn", he says rather humorously, "could be seduced from the substantial comforts of existence to seek destruction and disgrace, for the sake of such imaginary grandeur."³ On the other hand, the drama appeals to the nobler impulses of man and tends to raise rather than lower his conceptions of morality.

In his delineation of the trying months that followed the publication of "Die Räuber", Carlyle shows the utmost sympathy with the retiring, sensitive poet. Schiller, he says, was not a whining sentimental character: he rose above his misfortunes and sought relief from them in "vigorous action". At this time his unfailing energy found its expression in the two dramas, "Kabale und Liebe", and "Fiesco". In both of these dramas, Carlyle appreciates the fact that Schiller's views of life have changed, that experience has matured his reason and given him a deeper knowledge of human nature. In the three plays of the poet's youth, the critic marks

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 17.

2. Ibid. 19.

3. Ibid. 22.

the progressive state of Schiller's education. They express, he says, "the fiery enthusiasm of youth, exasperated into wildness, astonishing in its movements rather than sublime; and the same enthusiasm gradually yielding to the sway of reason, gradually using itself to the constraints prescribed by sound judgment and more extensive knowledge."¹

Carlyle does not go into a minute discussion of these latter plays. In "Fiesco" he commends the "felicitous delineation" of circumstances and scenes. Aside from this, however, it is the evidence of a distinctively creative faculty, which constitutes his principle enjoyment in the drama. He still sees marks of many of Schiller's former defects - his "lack of pliancy", "use of rude contrasts", "heaviness of motion"² - yet these are more than counterbalanced by the constant flow of powerful thought combined with sentiment and creative genius. "Kabale und Liebe" he defends against the severe criticisms of contemporary critics. The value of Schiller's drama has been lessened by "a multitude of worthless or noxious imitations", by the "Kotzebues and other intellectual Jacobins",³ who, Carlyle feels, are responsible for the contemptuous attitude on the part of Englishmen towards the German theatre. August Wilhelm Schlegel has spoken "slightly" of Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe" when he referred to its "overstrained sensibility". For his part, Carlyle discovered little overstraining in the characters of Louisa and Ferdinand. "Their sensibility", he continues, "we did not reckon very criminal; seeing it united with

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 39.

2. Ibid. - 32.

3. Ibid. - 36.

a clearness of judgment, chastened by a purity of heart, and controlled by a force of virtuous resolution, in full proportion with itself".¹ The great merit of the drama lies in the characters of the hero and heroine and as a tragedy of common life, it has few rivals and certainly no superiors.

In Part Two, Carlyle treats of Schiller's life from his settlement at Mannheim, to his removal to Jena in 1790. The author introduces the chapter with a lengthy discussion on the temptations and perils of the literary man, emphasizing again the "entire and unchanging ardour" of Schiller, whom he compares in this respect to Milton. This is one of the earliest indications of Carlyle's use of comparative criticism, which will be discussed more in detail later. Carlyle also discusses the lofty position of the theatre in Germany, which he considers as "the great nucleus of German literature".² Schiller is treated in relation to his three-fold activities during this period, as the prose-writer, the lyric poet, and the dramatist.

Schiller's activities as a prose writer extend over the entire middle period and the early years of his professorship at Jena, which Carlyle treats in Part Three of his biography. However, as he lays very little emphasis on this phase of Schiller's work, it seems best to disregard the chronological order and treat the prose writings in a group together.

In the "Philosophische Briefe", the first of Schiller's philosophical productions, Carlyle, as we would expect, reads Schiller's own inner conflict. Julius and Raphael are to him

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 36.

2. Ibid. - 47.

the emblems of Schiller's own fears and hopes. It is Schiller's attempt to make his philosophy and his poetry agree, says Carlyle. Aside from the fact, however, that they exhibit the state of Schiller's thought at the time they were written, Carlyle considers the letters of "little interest". He criticizes them not only as short and incomplete, but as lacking in originality as well. "Schiller", he says, "has surveyed the dark Serbonian bog of Infidelity, but he has made no causeway through it".¹

In his treatment of Schiller's letters "Ueber die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen", Carlyle is not so much concerned with the work itself as with his defense of the German philosopher, Kant, upon whose theories the work is based. Although he admits his own limited acquaintance with the subject, Carlyle feels that Kant has been the object of unjust criticism in England. He concedes, however, that Kant's philosophy is probably "combined with errors to the very core"; yet he is convinced that it bears in it the "everlasting gold of truth".² His countrymen have considered Kantism from too utilitarian a viewpoint; they have failed to comprehend its meaning and have condemned the whole system as worthless. In Schiller's "Ästhetische Briefe" are to be found the characteristic defects of the Kantian system, but in them also Carlyle finds a fundamental merit which more than counterbalances their faults. This digression on Kant is of interest in view of the fact that he was not only sharply opposed in England, but in his own country as well. Schiller's other philosophical writings are merely mentioned, for at this time Carlyle, as he himself ac-

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 52.

2. Ibid. - 114.

knowledges, had not studied very extensively into this particular field.

With Schiller's works as a historian Carlyle was more familiar, although in his treatment more emphasis is laid upon the poet's theories than upon the works themselves. Schiller's method of procedure is defined as philosophical, one to which very few authors are equal, says Carlyle. He praises especially Schiller's wonderful power of discrimination, which enabled him to grasp the essential features of an event and to see the relative importance of minor circumstances. The "Geschichte des Abfalls der vereinigten Niederländer" and the "Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges"², Schiller's principal works as a historian, afford, in Carlyle's opinion, but a "feeble exemplification" of the ideas which he entertained on the manner of recording history. The former he commends for its rare combination of imagination and intellect, saying that it might have ranked as the very best of Schiller's prose compositions had it been completed. In the "Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges", however, he feels that Schiller has carried his philosophical method to excess. He agrees with Schiller's theory that the appeal of history should be universal, but here the extreme attention to philosophical facts has led to over-generalization. Schiller's ideas are not enough in the concrete, he lacks unity of thought and his speculation savors of the inexperienced theorist. "But still", Carlyle adds in closing, "there is an energy, a vigorous beauty in the work, which far more than redeem its failings",¹

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 104.

and it is still the best historical performance of which Germany can boast.

On Schiller, the lyric poet, Carlyle makes still less comment. The lyrics of the "Rheinische Thalia", the "Lied an die Freude", and the poetical productions in the "Horen" and "Musen-Almanach" are only mentioned. The lyrics immediately following the publication of "Don Karlos", however, are discussed more at length. Schiller, Carlyle explains, had grown weary of the drama and among other activities had turned to the lyric, which served as an outlet for the indecision and restlessness of this period of his life. Carlyle recognizes a deep insight into life and praises again that rare combination of feeling, thought, and imagery, which he feels to be so characteristic of Schiller and which he praises so highly in the poet's historical performances. Of the individual productions, "Der Spaziergang" and "Das Lied von der Glocke" are commended for the "exquisite delineations of the fortunes and history of man"; "Ritter Toggenburg", "Die Kraniche des Ibykus", and "Hero und Leander" are ranked "among the most poetical and moving ballads to be found in any language".¹ The "Freigeisterei der Leidenschaft" is also mentioned, but this is the extent of Carlyle's criticisms of Schiller's lyrics. As in the case of his prose-writings, it is probably due to the fact that Carlyle had not yet studied very extensively into this particular phase of Schiller's activities.

In the discussion of "Don Karlos" the only drama treated in Part Two, Carlyle is again the enthusiastic critic of Part One. He is interested in Schiller's lyric and prose performances and has

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 82

studied them to some extent, but he does not wax eloquent over them as over the dramas. It is the dramatist, whom he has really studied and upon whom he loves to dwell. "Don Karlos" in a more marked manner than the other writings of this period is an expression of the growth of Schiller's mind. It is the first of his plays, says Carlyle, which bears anything like the stamp of full maturity. Schiller has developed from the wild enthusiast of "Die Räuber" into the enlightened moralist, who no longer spurns the evils of the world but seeks a remedy for them.

As Karl von Moor in "Die Räuber" is a type of the youthful Schiller, so the Marquis von Posa in "Don Karlos" is the representation of the matured Schiller. Carlyle praises the fidelity with which scene and action are rendered and likewise Schiller's skill in revealing the inner life of his characters; but his interest seems to center in Posa alone. The ardent love of man, which is the ruling force of Posa's life, is to him the expression of the constant feeling of the poet; and had the opportunity afforded itself, Schiller would have advocated the cause of truth with the same eloquence. Of the individual scenes, Carlyle observes that there are few passages in poetry which appeal more strongly to the emotions than Posa's last message to Carlos or his interview with Philip. The latter is translated in its entirety. "It is pleasing to behold in Posa", says Carlyle, "the deliberate expression of a great and good man's sentiments on these ever-agitated subjects: a noble monument, embodying the liberal ideas of his age, in a form beautified by his own genius, and lasting as its other products".¹ This statement was somewhat modified in the edition of

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 76.

1845, where Carlyle partially assents to Jean Paul's criticism of Posa, when he says: "Jean Paul nevertheless, not without some show of reason, has compared this Posa to the tower of a lighthouse: 'high, far-shining, empty!'"¹

In the early edition he would defend Schiller from every attack on the part of contemporary critics. The superiority of Posa in the last two acts over Carlos, the real hero of the drama, is to him an imperfection of which the general reader will take little account if he is intent on being moved and uplifted rather than on applying the dramatic gauge. Carlyle feels that the real object of poetry is the appeal to the emotions; he would be exalted and lifted out of himself. He acknowledges that there is a want of ease and lightness in the general composition of *Don Karlos*, that the language is at times bombastic and that Schiller's style is often too elevated to be natural, but these defects are overshadowed by the superior merits of the drama. Carlyle would seek for Schiller's power elsewhere: "What gives him a place of his own and the loftiest of its kind, is the vastness and intense vigor of his mind; the splendour of his thought and imagery, and the bold vehemence of his passion for the true and sublime under all its forms".²

Carlyle closes his criticism with a clear-cut comparison of Schiller's drama with that of the great Italian dramatist, Alfieri, which treats of the same subject but in an entirely different manner. "Filippo" is based on antique models and is marked by brevity and severe simplicity of style. It is only in expressing the character of Philip, Carlyle observes, that Alfieri is at all su-

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 76.

2. Ibid. -78.

perior to Schiller. Schiller, he says, has revealed the inmost recesses of the tyrant's heart, but Alfieri has surrounded his hero with mystery and drawn for the reader as wicked a man as human imagination can conceive. The reader understands Schiller's hero and naturally fears him the less. In summarizing the comparative merits of the two dramatists Carlyle says briefly: "Schiller seems to have the greater genius; Alfieri the more commanding character".¹

In Part Two, aside from his discussions of Schiller's productions during this period, are found some of the earliest traces of Carlyle's ideas of comparative criticism. Two instances have already been mentioned: the similarity of Schiller's and Milton's poetical faculties,² and the comparison of Schiller's "Don Karlos" with Alfieri's "Filippo".³ In Carlyle's discussion of the relations of Goethe and Schiller, however, the most striking example is found. He feels that no two men of genius could have possessed more entirely different types of excellence. To give an approximate conception of the contrast of the two, he asks the reader to imagine an interview between Shakespeare and Milton. This is most significant. Side by side with Shakespeare, the idol of the English people, Carlyle does not hesitate to place Goethe, the poet of a nation to which his own countrymen were hostile; with Milton, England's classic poet, he would rank Schiller, who was not even appreciated in his own country. Carlyle has advanced far ahead of contemporary English critics and is able to see literature in its universal aspect.

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 80.

2. Ibid. - 44.

3. Ibid. - 79-80.

Part Three deals with the most productive period of Schiller's life, from his settlement at Jena in 1790 until his death in 1805. Having previously mentioned Carlyle's treatment of the prose productions of this period, he is now to be considered as the critic of Schiller's later dramas. The primary vocation of Schiller's nature was poetry, says Carlyle in introduction. His historical and critical studies served only as a means to a greater end, for, as the critic observes in Part Two, to such a mind as Schiller's the development of all its powers was a necessity.¹ These minor activities had resulted in an immense accession of ideas. Criticism had exalted his notions of art, while historical research had not only provided him with new objects of thought, but had enabled him to see the relation of characters and events and broadened his conception of human nature. Thus new materials were provided for his poetical faculties to work upon. His latent power of imagination, which had evinced itself only in minor poems since the publication of "Don Karlos", now turned to the drama, for "he felt", says Carlyle, "that after all his wide excursions, the true home of his genius was the Drama, the department where its powers had first been tried, and were now by habit or nature best qualified to act".² To Carlyle, at this time, the drama seems to be Schiller's real field of work, an opinion which is somewhat modified in his later essay on the poet.

In "Wallenstein," the first of the poet's later dramas, Carlyle finds the embodiment of Schiller's enlarged ideas and intellectual growth. It is by far, in his opinion, the best per-

1. Thomas Carlyle, "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 84.

2. Ibid. - 119.

formance which Schiller had yet produced. In the "Vorspiel", "Wallensteins Lager", he admires the distinctness and reality with which the camp of the great general is portrayed. It "stands as a porch to the great edifice"¹ and its sharpness of feature reminds him of Smollett's seamen. The "rude Hudibrastic metre", which he compares to the hard and irregular beat of the regimental drum, serves to increase the poetic realism of the scene. In the generals and colonels of the "Zwei Piccolomini" are the same motives and passions, a little more refined and disguised than those of the Cuirassiers and Jägers of "Wallensteins Lager". The clash of conflicting interests and the din of war Carlyle felt to be the suitable accompaniment to the commanding movements of the principle characters.

Of the individual characters Carlyle finds Wallenstein by far the most imposing. In him the critic sees a model of the lofty-minded, accomplished man, whose better nature is overruled by ambition. Schiller, Carlyle observes, has succeeded where it is almost impossible to do so. He has been true to historical facts; on the other hand, by revealing the inmost character of his hero, he enables the reader to see the noble and good in the man who is a traitor to his emperor. Octavio is a type of the "skilful, prudent, managing statesman".² The union of two such powerful forces as Wallenstein and Octavio, says Carlyle, gives rise to many possibilities, but Schiller has utilized them all.

In Max and Thekla Carlyle takes his greatest delight, devoting the greater part of his criticism to them alone. Max, with his youthful ardour and high ideals would naturally appeal to such

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 129.

2. Ibid. - 134.

a critic as Carlyle. He describes him very eloquently as "the very poetry of war, the essence of a youthful hero".¹ In Thekla he takes still greater pleasure. The quiet inspiration and beautiful simplicity with which Schiller describes her love for Max, Carlyle finds irresistible. The pathos and deeply emotional aspect of their relations appeals strongly to him. "There are few passages in poetry more sublimely pathetic than this",² is Carlyle's observation on the scene in which Thekla realizes that she must give up her lover. Later he adds: "the fate of Max and Thekla might draw tears from the eyes of a stoic."³

Scene IV of Act I and Scenes X, XI, and XII of Act IV are translated in their entirety. In a letter to Jane Welsh on April 6, 1823, Carlyle writes: "By the way, I wish you would think of the most striking passages you can recollect of in Karlos, Wallenstein, Tell, etc: I design to give extracts and translations."⁴ It would be interesting to know if the passages mentioned above were selected by Miss Welsh. Unfortunately no further reference to the matter is made in their correspondence.

Carlyle closes his discussion of "Wallenstein" with a very striking comparison of Schiller and other dramatists. Here he compares Schiller rather than Goethe with Shakespeare. Except in "Macbeth" or "Othello" he knows of no scene in literature equal to the death of Wallenstein in Act IV. Schiller's genius, he admits, is much narrower than that of the English dramatist, but in "his own

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 136.

2. Ibid. - 143.

3. Ibid. - 149.

4. C. E. Norton - "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - 11-192.

peculiar province, the exciting of lofty, earnest, strong emotion",¹ he has no superior. Carlyle considers "Wallenstein" without question the greatest dramatic performance of the eighteenth century. In France it has never been excelled, not even by Corneille in the seventeenth century. In England since Elizabethan times there has been no dramatist who even admits of comparison with Schiller. "About the time of Wallenstein's appearance", says Carlyle, "we of this gifted land were shuddering at the 'Castle Spectre'.² Finally he speaks of Goethe. He concedes that on "some rare occasions" Goethe has shown talents on a higher order than those manifested in "Wallenstein"; "but he has made no equally regular and powerful exertion of them".³ "Faust", Goethe's masterpiece, he characterizes as a "careless effusion" in comparison with "Wallenstein". This criticism is most significant in view of the fact that Carlyle had already written his appreciation of "Faust" and was at that time translating Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister". His letters to Jane Welsh likewise testify to an admiration of Goethe. On March 4, 1823, he writes to Jane, "This Goethe has as much in him as any ten of them"⁴; again on April 6 of the same year he observes, "I think Goethe the only living model of a great writer".⁵

"Maria Stuart" Carlyle dismisses with a few words, showing all the causticity of an Englishman in his criticism. The subject he considers as trite, and the moral has little to recommend it. Not only have historical facts been disregarded, but the cha-

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 150.

2. Ibid. - 150.

3. Ibid. - 150.

4. C. E. Norton - "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - II - 184.

5. Ibid. - II - 191.

racter of Elizabeth has been misrepresented. He admits that Schiller has attained his purpose in making the reader love and pardon the heroine, but otherwise the drama is worthy of little commendation. "Compared with Wallenstein its purpose is narrow and its result common".¹

"Die Jungfrau von Orleans" made an entirely different impression upon Carlyle. Schiller's idealized conception of Jeanne d'Arc is to his mind vastly superior to that of either Shakespeare or Voltaire, both of whom emphasize the crude, supernatural aspects of the event. In Schiller's Joanna, Carlyle sees a resemblance to the Iphigenia of the Greeks. In the purity of her character, the strength of her purpose and her lofty heroism lies Joanna's superiority as a heroine; he considers her "the most noble being in tragedy". On the other characters Carlyle makes very little comment; his interest centers in Joanna and the psychological development of her character. In the course of the discussion Scenes IV, V, VI, VII, IX, X of Act III are translated. The supernatural element, which has been the cause of much adverse criticism, Carlyle considers of little importance in the general result. It is more than counterbalanced by the aesthetic quality of the drama. Among all of Schiller's plays "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" is the one which evinces most of that quality known as genius. It is one of the finest of modern dramas, says Carlyle, and in its aesthetic appeal it even surpasses "Wallenstein". "Wallenstein embodies more thought, more knowledge, more conception; but it is only in parts illuminated by that ethereal brightness which shines over every

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 154.

part of this".¹

"Die Braut von Messina", Schiller's attempt to modernize the Grecian tragedy, is treated as briefly as "Maria Stuart". It is little more than an experiment, says Carlyle, and a proof of Schiller's constant desire to improve his art. By the introduction of the Greek chorus and a superabundance of reflective passages the action has been retarded. The drama fails in the primary object of every tragedy, in that it does not move its hearers. It is remarkable, however, says the critic, for its individual beauties, although it is ineffectual as a whole. It is especially rich in rare specimens of lyrical poetry, and "for beautiful and touching delineations of life; for pensive and pathetic reflections, sentiments and images, conveyed in language simple but nervous and emphatic, this tragedy stands high in the rank of modern compositions".²

In "Wilhelm Tell" Carlyle feels that Schiller has redeemed himself for his failure in the preceding drama. The former he speaks of as "one of Schiller's very finest dramas," although his criticism is not ardently enthusiastic as it is in the case of "Don Karlos" or "Wallenstein". No doubt this is due to his early disappointment in "Wilhelm Tell", which has already been noted in his letters to Jane Welsh.³ There is a certain similarity in the two criticisms. The lack of unity, which is alluded to in his letter to Jane, is spoken of in the "Life" as the "principal, or rather sole, deficiency of the present work".⁴ Here, however, it is con-

- 1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 170.

2. Ibid. - 173.

3. C. E. Norton - "Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - II - 156.

4. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 186.

sidered in a favorable light as well. Such a manner of treatment, says Carlyle, enabled Schiller to give us the broader, more comprehensive view of Alpine life than would have been possible otherwise.

That which primarily interests Carlyle in "Wilhelm Tell" is the poet's realistic treatment of Swiss life. He admires the note of naturalness and simplicity which is expressed in setting and characters, - the entire absence of sham and sentimentality. Schiller has accomplished that which is the highest problem in art, says Carlyle, for he has given a true representation of lowly life and enlivened the same by genius without sacrificing the truth in any feature. Among Carlyle's own countrymen, only Burns in the "Cotter's Saturday Night" has in any way equalled Schiller. Wordsworth, whose primary object was to portray the beautiful in common life, Carlyle considers very inferior. Wordsworth's pedlars, leech-gatherers, and dalesmen he designates as "whining drivellers" in comparison with the sturdy men of Rütli. The strict adherence to historical facts is also highly praised by the critic. Schiller had never seen the Alpine country, but gives a wonderfully accurate description of the life and manners of these people at the time of the Swiss Revolution. Of the individual characters Tell only is mentioned. The simplicity, rugged strength, and unswerving purpose of the mountaineer are emphasized. To motivate Tell's murder of Gessler Carlyle gives a minute analysis of his inner character. In this connection, the entire scene at Küssnacht, Act IV, Scene III, is translated.

Carlyle closes his discussion by comparing "Wilhelm Tell"

with Schiller's other dramas. "Wallenstein" he finds more "comprehensive and ambitious", "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" more "ethereal". In naturalness and realism of presentation, however, "Wilhelm Tell" is vastly superior to either. It makes its appeal through the universal feelings of man. "It is delightful and salutary to the heart" says Carlyle, "to wander among the scenes of 'Tell': all is lovely, yet all is real."¹

Part Three is concluded with a somewhat lengthy discussion of Schiller's moral and intellectual qualities. As is always the case in the true genius, there is an accurate conformity between the two. Carlyle expresses his admiration of the poet's lofty conception of morality and of his constant strivings for perfection in spite of disease and suffering. Schiller's quiet unobtrusiveness, his lack of self-interest, the child-like simplicity of his life and works are felt to be the true concomitants of genius. The poet's mental gifts Carlyle considers of the highest order. He admires the vastness and scope of Schiller's intellect, which together with his "half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination" and his "vehemence of temperament" makes up the fiber of his genius. His works, however, says Carlyle, show rather "extraordinary strength than extraordinary fineness or versatility". As a dramatist, his ability is limited to one type of characters; only the grave and serious aspects of life are considered. "Chance", says the critic, "principally made the drama his department; he might have shone equally in many others."² This is most significant in view of Carlyle's previous statement that no dramatist except Shakespeare is worthy of

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 187.

2. Ibid. - 193.

comparison with Schiller. It shows an appreciation of the extent of Schiller's genius which would have enabled him, in Carlyle's opinion, to succeed in any field.

Carlyle decries the critics who have narrowed the bounds of genius to include only Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe. He considers genius an indefinable quality, and a definition which would exclude such a mind as Schiller is impossible. "In another age", says Carlyle, almost prophetically, "this Schiller will stand forth in the foremost rank among the master-spirits of his century; and be admitted to a place among the chosen of all centuries. His works, the memory of what he did and was, will rise afar off like a towering landmark in the solitude of the Past, when distance shall have dwarfed into invisibility the lesser people that encompassed him, and hid him from the near beholder."¹

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 203.

CHAPTER II

CARLYLE'S LATER INTEREST IN SCHILLER

Considering Carlyle's early enthusiasm for Schiller, which found its expression in the "Life", it would seem natural to expect further activities in this field. The contrary, however, appears to be true. Only one work relating to the German poet, the essay entitled "Schiller", followed the biography and it was not published until 1831. That it was Carlyle's intention originally to make an extensive series of translations of Schiller's dramas is evident from a letter to his brother Alexander in January 1825, shortly before the publication of the "Life" in book form. "I have written to Edinburgh" writes Carlyle, "about a projected translation of Schiller's Works. Brewster sends me word that Blackwood has no doubt he will be able to engage with me in Schiller or in some other literary object." This plan, however, came to nought as is ascertained at the close of the same letter: "Nay since I began to write this sentence, I have a letter from the scoundrel Boyd, 'respectfully declining' to engage in that speculation of Schiller! So that I rather suppose it must be renounced."¹ This perhaps is rather fortunate than otherwise for Carlyle's ability was more critical than poetical, as is very evident from the few translations he did make.

The period from 1825 to 1831 was the time of Carlyle's greatest activity as a critic of German literature. He studied

extensively in literature and philosophy, and published a great number of articles, not only on the individual German writers, but also on the subject in general. However, aside from a few cursory remarks, little is known of his attitude toward Schiller at this time. This neglect of Schiller is no doubt due to his intense Goethe study. Goethe was then the leading literary figure of Germany and, it might be added, of Europe as well. Immediately on its publication he had written Carlyle in commendation of his "Life of Schiller", and later had corresponded and exchanged gifts with the English critic. Through Goethe's influence Carlyle was elected to honorary membership in the Berlin "Gesellschaft für ausländische Literatur." A warm friendship grew up between the two and it was quite natural that Carlyle's admiration for Goethe should gradually supersede his early enthusiasm for Schiller. Carlyle's appreciation of "Faust" had already found expression in an article in the "Edinburgh Review" and he was translating "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre" at the same time that he was writing "The Life of Schiller." In 1828 the articles, "Goethe" and "Goethe's Helena", were published; and in 1832 "Goethe's Works" and translations of his "Novellen" and "Märchen." Aside from these actual productions there are countless references throughout all the essays of this period to Goethe and his place as a poet, especially in the "State of German Literature." Carlyle's letters to the poet also express the deepest admiration. On August 20, 1827, he writes: "Wie die Dinge stehen sind Ihre Werke mir ein Spiegel gewesen; unerbitten und ungehofft hat Ihre Weisheit mir Rath gebracht, und so sind Friede und Gesundheit der Seele aus der Ferne

bei mir eingekehrt, Denn ich war ehedem ein Ungläubiger, nicht an die Religion allein, sondern an all die Gnade und Schönheit deren Symbol sie ist."¹ At Goethe's death he writes to his brother Alexander: "Alas! Alas! I feel as if I had a second time lost a Father: he was to me a kind spiritual Father. The world holds not his like within it."²

As has already been stated, there are very few direct references to Schiller in any of Carlyle's works on German literature written between the publication of the "Life of Schiller" and the essay. These, however, for the present purpose are of the greatest importance as they are the only connecting link between the two criticisms. It is noticeable that Schiller is considered from an entirely different standpoint than formerly. The critic's interest seems to center in the poetical principles which Schiller set forth, rather than in his works themselves. Especial emphasis is laid upon the poet's connection with the "Xenien"-controversy and he is frequently referred to as its editor.

The first of these references occurs in the "German Romance" which appeared in 1827. In his discussion of Tieck, Carlyle writes: "The critical principles of Tieck and the Schlegels had already been set forth, in the form both of precept and prohibition, and with all the aids of philosophic depth and epigrammatic emphasis, by the united minds of Goethe and Schiller, in Horn and Xenien."³ This phase of Schiller's activities was very

1. Wilhelm Hertz - "Goethe's und Carlyle's Briefwechsel" - page 19.
2. C. E. Norton - "Letters of Thomas Carlyle" - II, 29.
3. Thomas Carlyle - "German Romance" - I, 261.

hastily passed over in the "Life" as Carlyle himself realized later. "This is but a lame account of the far-famed Xenien and their results" he adds in a foot-note in the edition of 1845. The reader is referred to Franz Horn's "Poesie und Beredtsamkeit" and to Carlyle's own treatment of the subject in the "State of German Literature."¹

The latter article was published in 1827 and has a comparatively large number of references to Schiller. He with Goethe, Herder, Kant and Richter are spoken of as the leaders of the new aesthetics and criticism in Germany.² In the passage alluded to in the preceding paragraph Carlyle speaks quite at length of the "Xenienkampf." "The Xenien (a series of philosophic epigrams jointly by Schiller and Goethe)" says Carlyle, "descended there³ unexpectedly, like a flood of ethereal fire, on the German literary world; quickening all that was noble into new life, but visiting the ancient empire of Dulness with astonishment and unknown pangs. The agitation was extreme; scarcely since the age of Luther has there been such a stir and strife in the intellect of Germany; indeed, scarcely since that age has there been a controversy, if we consider its ultimate bearings on the best and noblest interests of mankind, so important as this, which, for the time, seemed only to turn on metaphysical subtleties, and matters of mere elegance."⁴ The critic likewise showw a familiarity with Schiller's poetical conceptions and, in the course of his dis-

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1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - page 123.
 2. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - I, 53.
 3. Schiller's "Musenalmanach."
 4. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - I, 54.

cussion, quotes several passages from "Über die Ästhetische Eiziehung des Menschen", characterizing its author as the "mild, but lofty-minded Schiller."¹ Two interesting references to the relative merits of Schiller and Goethe are also noted. Carlyle affirms that there is an element of the divine in true poetry, and in this particular he would place the poetry of Germany above that of any nation. In proof of such an assertion he quotes Tieck, Richter, Herder and Schiller, adding rather significantly "and, above all, Goethe."² A similar instance occurs in the paragraph immediately following, where Carlyle is speaking of reality as one of the essentials of poetry. "This", observes the critic, "is what we prize in Goethe, and more or less in Schiller and the rest; all of whom, each in his own way, are writers of a similar aim."³ Schiller is later spoken of as the author of "Die Räuber" and "Wilhelm Tell", the former being considered as a representative of the "Kraftmänner" of the "Sturm und Drang" period.⁴ In the second part of the same essay, which is in defense of the critical philosophy of Kant, Schiller, together with Goethe, is referred to in his relation to the Kantian system: "Such men as Goethe and Schiller", says the critic, "cannot exist without effect in any literature or in any century: but if one circumstance more than another has contributed to forward their endeavors, and introduce that higher tone into the literature of Germany, it has been this philosophical system; to which, in wisely believing its results,

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" * I, 57-58.
2. Thomas Carlyle - Ibid. - p. 64.
3. Ibid. - p. 66.
4. Ibid. - p. 68.

or even in wisely denying them, all that was lofty and pure in the genius of poetry, or the reason of man, so readily allied itself."¹

The essays from 1827 to 1829 are almost devoid of any mention of Schiller. In "Goethe" (1828) but one direct reference is found and that is a quotation from Schiller's "Ästhetische Briefe."² This seems rather singular in that in both of his productions on Schiller, Carlyle speaks quite at length on the relations of the two poets. In the "German Playwrights", which was published in 1829, due respect is paid to Schiller's ability as a dramatist. "The German Parnassus, as one of its own denizens remarks, has a rather broad summit", observes the critic, "yet only two Dramatists are reckoned, within the last century, to have mounted thither: Schiller and Goethe; if we are not, on the strength of his *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilia Galotti*, to account Lessing also of the number."³

That Carlyle again took an active interest in Schiller is due to the "Goethe-Schiller Briefwechsel", the first part of which was sent to him by Goethe in July, 1829. Carlyle's early enthusiasm was awakened and found its expression in the essay entitled "Schiller." The first reference to a second work on the German poet is noted in a letter of Eckermann to Carlyle on July 2, 1829: "Ich höre von Goethe, dass er Ihnen jetzt die Briefe von ihm und Schiller sendet, und die neue Ausgabe der *Wanderjahre*. Die Briefe von Schiller werden Ihnen über die fortschreitende Bildung

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - I, 78.
 2. Thomas Carlyle - Ibid. I, 217.
 3. Ibid. I, 359.

dieses bedeutenden Mannes, sowie über sein innigstes Verhältniss zu Goethe die merkwürdigsten Aufschlüsse geben; und da Sie bereits durch Ihr "Leben von Schiller" so bewundernswürdig eingedrungen sind, so möchte wohl niemand von diesen Briefen einen gröszeren Gewinn haben, als eben Sie. - - - Ich bin gewiss dasz Ihnen diese Correspondenz zu einer zweiten Auflage Ihres Lebens von Schiller die trefflichsten Materialien liefert.¹ In November of the same year Carlyle writes to Goethe that he has read the Briefwechsel and expects to read it again, purposing to make it a handle for an essay on Schiller in the "Foreign Review." "Vornehmlich bewunderte ich", continues Carlyle, "die Würde des Verhältnisses, das zwischen Schiller und seinem Freunde zur Erscheinung kommt, die Freimüthigkeit im gegenseitigen Geben und Empfangen, das edle Streben auf beiden Seiten; Verehrung für fremde Grösze ist mit bescheidener Selbstständigkeit schön in Schiller verbunden, dessen einfache hohe, ernste Natur in diesem Briefwechsel wieder in helles Licht tritt."² Of the completion of the essay, Carlyle writes in his next letter to Goethe on December 22, 1829: "Ich habe den Briefwechsel ein zweites Mal mit nicht geringer Befriedigung gelesen und eben heute schicke ich einen Aufsatz über Schiller für die Foreign Review ab, der auf dies Werk basirt ist."³ The article, however, did not appear until two years later, when it was published in "Fraser's Magazine".

The essay on Schiller is an expression of Carlyle's

1. Wilhelm Hertz - "Goethe's und Carlyle's Briefwechsel" - 69.
2. Ibid. - 75.
3. Ibid. - 80.

matured genius. Since his early publication on the same subject, he has studied all phases of German literature and his views have broadened. The youthful enthusiast has become the keen discriminating critic. The "Goethe-Schiller Briefwechsel" gives Carlyle a new insight into the life and purpose of Schiller and this he embodies in the essay of 1831. If he has seemed negligent of Schiller it is not from want of affection, Carlyle explains in introduction. His admiration for the German poet is of old standing, and has not changed, as it "ripened into calm, loving estimation." In the essay it is not Carlyle's purpose to assert the rank and excellence of Schiller. The German poet, he observes, has already been accepted almost universally as the "pattern man and master" of the Romanticist class, and such an exposition is deemed unnecessary. The critic's interest centers rather in the development of Schiller's genius. He compares Schiller to a rich cargo which has survived shipwreck and misfortune and has come safely to land. "How was this man successful? from what peculiar point of view did he attempt penetrating the secret of spiritual Nature? From what region of Prose rise into Poetry? Under what outward incidents; with what inward faculties; by what methods; with what result?"¹ is that which Carlyle will establish for the reader.

The essay proper falls into two main divisions, the first being devoted to the life of the poet and the latter to a critical analysis of his character. Schiller's life, says

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 174.

Carlyle, is purely a literary one; "that of a man existing only for contemplation" and devoted solely to the pursuit of the ideal. In its simplicity and purity it seems almost priestlike; and, as the life of the Holy Man, it has but one great epoch - the taking on of literary vows. What lies before is the period of struggle; that which follows the time of spiritual calm and attainment.

It is the former period which primarily interests Carlyle. Passing briefly over the fortunate circumstances of Schiller's earlier years, the critic emphasizes again the important bearing of the poet's vicissitudes at Stuttgart upon his later activities. The long passage in the biography relating to this period of Schiller's life is quoted almost in full. The oppression which Schiller suffered, says Carlyle, was an oppression of the moral sense, a "fettering not of Desires only, but of the pure reasonable will." As in the earlier work, however, this early experience of Schiller is of the deepest significance to Carlyle, and a necessary stage in the poet's development. Had the discipline of Stuttgart been less stringent, the critic considers it very probable that Schiller would have been a poet of far inferior character. Those qualities, which were to distinguish him through life were the outgrowth of this testing period. His strong determination, above all, enabled him to rise above oppression and suffering. Says Carlyle: "One element of strength, however, and the root of all strength, he throughout evinces: he wills one thing and knows what he wills. His mind has a purpose, and still better, a right purpose."¹ This is, likewise, the keynote of the

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 184.

poet's subsequent life, which the critic discusses very briefly. The desire for spiritual perfection, which in Schiller was a love for poetry, is the ruling force of his whole being, says Carlyle. Schiller's connection with Goethe he considers the most important circumstance of the poet's literary life. Continuing the old figure he makes a striking comparison of the two poets: if Schiller is the Priest, then is Goethe the Bishop by whom he is ordained to priesthood and from whom he has secured his spiritual light. Carlyle would lay the greater emphasis on Goethe, who as the older of the two has little to expect with what he gives. "By the side of his friend", says Carlyle, "Schiller rises into the highest regions of Art he ever reached; and in all worthy things is sure of sympathy, of one wise judgment amid a crowd of unwise ones, of one helpful hand amid many hostile."¹ Carlyle closes this part of his discussion with an appreciation of the heroism of Schiller in the face of disease and intense suffering, digressing quite at length upon the subject of happiness. That Schiller should have written his greatest dramas and his deepest speculations at the time of the greatest physical distress was a constant source of admiration to Carlyle - probably the more so in that he had passed through a similar experience.

The latter half of the essay treats of Schiller's moral and intellectual character. In forming some conception of Schiller as a man, says Carlyle, the very perfection of his life tends to

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 187.

diminish its greatness. Schiller seems to him not so much a great character as a holy one. The title of Priest, Carlyle feels, best describes the quiet, even tenor of the poet's life. Schiller is possessed and ruled by one "high enthusiasm", in pursuit of which he lives apart from men; yet, says the critic, he does not estrange himself from their interests. It is rather a deeper concern for them which causes him to devote himself so wholly to his task. Through the medium of poetry, Schiller is able to accomplish that which is impossible to the political reformer or demagogue. "In a word we can say of Schiller," says Carlyle, "what can be said only of few in any country or time: He was a high ministering servant at Truth's altar; and bore him worthily of the office he held."¹

Carlyle's criticism so far is almost in exact accord with that of his earlier work - perhaps a little more elucidated in some instances. It is in his discussion of Schiller's intellectual character that he takes a standpoint, which seems almost negative in comparison with that of the "Life." Schiller's intellectual character, says Carlyle, is in accurate conformity with his moral one. His excellence, however, is marked by its simplicity; it is "lofty rather than expansive or varied; pure, rather than great." Here, Schiller's poetry seems to Carlyle a partial rather than a universal gift, not the product of his whole nature but rather of only certain faculties. In sharp contrast to this statement is the opinion expressed in the "Life": "Thus poetry in

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 197.

Schiller was not one but many gifts. - - - it was what true poetry is always, the quintessence of general mental riches, the purified result of strong thought and conception, and of refined as well as powerful emotion.¹ In the essay, Carlyle even doubts if poetry is Schiller's primary endowment. "Nay, often it seems to us", says the critic, "as if poetry were, on the whole, not his essential gift; as if his genius were reflective in a still higher degree than creative; philosophical and oratorical rather than poetic."² Carlyle would lay all emphasis upon the poet's "understanding", which he denominates as the most perfect of Schiller's endowments. A criticism far more just is that in the earlier work, where Carlyle observes that perhaps Schiller's greatest faculty was a "half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination."³

Schiller's principle fault, to Carlyle's mind, is his lack of universality. He feels that Schiller in his pursuit of the ideal has neglected the common interests of man, which to the critic are of "boundless significance." says Carlyle: "For the most part, the Common is to him still the Common; or it is idealized, rather as it were by mechanical art than by inspiration."⁴ This "aristocratic fastidiousness" Carlyle finds characteristic of all of Schiller's earlier works and to some extent of his later productions. In speculation and poetry the poet's mind turned to old conventional themes and life was viewed as "from a college window." Carlyle even finds this true of the transition drama, "Don Karlos",

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 193.
2. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 198.
3. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 192.
4. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 199.

characterizing Posa in the words of Jean Paul as "towering aloft, far-shining, clear, and also cold and vacant, as a sea-beacon." This criticism, as has already been mentioned in Chapter One, was later interpolated in the "Life". In Schiller's later years, however, Carlyle admits that the poet in a great measure overcomes this fault, quoting as proof the poem, "Das Lied der Glocke", and the drama, "Wilhelm Tell," which in spirit and style Carlyle here designates as the best of all of Schiller's dramas.

A second imperfection, closely allied to the first is Schiller's singular want of humor. Carlyle has already mentioned this briefly in the "Life."¹ It, he considers both as a cause and a consequence of the poet's lack of universality, for in the portrayal of common life, says Carlyle, humor is an essential element. It has been justly regarded, he remarks, as the "finest perfection of poetic genius." He knows of no writer of real poetic ability, who shows such a deficiency as Schiller, for only in "Wallensteins Lager" has he shown any traces of humor. Schiller's nature, says Carlyle, was without humor. "His works are full of laboured earnestness; he is the gravest of all writers."²

The purpose of these observations, Carlyle informs us, is to define the limits and phases of Schiller's genius, not in any way to question its reality. He acknowledges Schiller's superiority in the field of the pathetic and tragic; here, observes Carlyle, Schiller shows a master hand and is perhaps the greatest of all late poets. Other men of genius have shown similar imperfections

1. Thomas Carlyle - "The Life of Friedrich Schiller" - 193.

2. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 201.

and none more so than the English poet, Milton, whom Carlyle compares a second time with Schiller. Milton, like Schiller, observes the critic, is concerned only with the grave and serious aspects of life and is likewise almost devoid of humor. Also on the positive side Carlyle traces a resemblance between the two poets. In both he finds the same intensity of purpose and the "same concentration toward whatever is sublime in nature and art."

The special phases of Schiller's activities, Carlyle likewise treats very briefly, mentioning only his work as a dramatist and a philosophic writer. He realizes that it is in the former capacity that Schiller has become known to the world; yet, as formerly in the "Life", he feels that this was largely due to chance. "Often we feel", observes Carlyle, "as if chance rather than a natural tendency had led him into this province; as if his talent were essentially, in a certain style, lyrical, perhaps even epic, rather than dramatic. - - - Nay much of what is called his poetry, seems to us oratorical rather than poetical."¹ Carlyle admits, however, that Schiller had that within him which could not be expressed otherwise than in some form of poetry, although, says the critic, he was unable to body it forth without the greatest difficulty. Of Schiller's unfailing energy and the wonderful progress he made in his art, Carlyle is well aware. He contrasts "Die Räuber" and "Die Jungfrau von Orleans", comparing what he denominates as the "ferocities and Sibylline frenzies" of the Moor's soliloquy on suicide with the placid strength of the

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 202.

death scene of Talbot. In the latter he distinguishes no traces of the "Power-words and Thunder-Words", which he finds so characteristic of the early drama. "That volcanic fury has assuaged itself", says Carlyle, "instead of smoke and red lava, we have sunshine and a verdant world."¹ A like development is noted in Schiller's other later dramas and likewise in his shorter poems, as an example of which "Das Alpenlied" is given in translation.

For the philosophic writer Carlyle's admiration is no less ardent than in the earlier work. He finds evidences of Schiller's keen, penetrating mind not only in the objects he treats, but likewise in his manner of treatment. Schiller's philosophy was his own, says Carlyle. He studied and adopted many of the principles of Kant, but he so adapted them to his own use that he made a new philosophy, distinctive of himself. The "Asthetische Briefe", which Carlyle has already quoted so frequently, he characterizes as "one of the deepest, most compact pieces of reasoning"² with which he is acquainted. Two passages from the "Briefwechsel" with Goethe are also quoted, but are without comment.

In conclusion Carlyle acknowledges that he has spoken rather on the negative side, but it was likewise intentional on his part he informs the reader. He remarks that it is a gratifying circumstance that a critic in admiring a poet, so much loved as Schiller, may coolly judge of him without prejudicing right feeling. The comparison of Goethe and Schiller, with which Carlyle

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays" - II, 209.

2. Ibid. - 212.

closes his discussion, is very significant of his growing admiration for Goethe. The question as to which of the two poets is the greater seems to Carlyle a "slender one". Not only are their endowments dissimilar, but it is a question which he feels has been abundantly answered. Goethe, in his opinion, is without question the greater poet. His mind is intuitive, comprehensive, and instinct with melody, says Carlyle. He would characterize him as the "born poet" in contrast to Schiller as the "made poet". He is emphasizing again the purely intellectual turn of Schiller's mind, which he describes as "scholastic, divisive, only partially and as it were artificially melodious."¹ This is in exact accord with the statement earlier in the essay where Carlyle denominates understanding as the most perfect of Schiller's endowments. In closing, however, he recognizes Schiller as one of the "noblest productions of his century and nation" and prophesies for him a lasting veneration in coming years.

The contrast between "The Life of Schiller" and the essay "Schiller" is due, not to a radical change in Carlyle's opinions of Schiller, but rather to the development of his critical ideas. His mind has matured since the first publication and hence his judgments are more clear-cut and penetrating. He would reveal to the reader Schiller's inmost character, and seeks to discover both wherein Schiller excels and wherein his genius is deficient. Consequently the critic assumes an attitude in the essay which seems almost negative in comparison with that in the earlier work.

In his lofty abstraction and his devotion to his art, Schiller appeals to Carlyle more and more as the priest - a term which

1. Thomas Carlyle - "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays," II,-214.

is used many times in the essay. Likewise, more emphasis is laid upon the relations of Schiller and Goethe, and Schiller's dependence upon the older poet. Both are to be attributed to the critic's interest in the "Goethe-Schiller Briefwechsel". The same attitude toward Schiller is noted in two letters written to Goethe in the year following the writing of "Schiller". On August 31, 1830, Carlyle writes to Goethe thanking him for the "herrlichen Briefwechsel", which like a magic chariot carries him into beloved scenes. Of Schiller and Goethe he writes: "Für Schiller, dessen hoher und wahrer aber einsamer, leidender, sich selbst verzehrender Geist fast tragisch in diesen Briefen offenbar wird, musz ein solcher Bund unschätzbar gewesen sein. Auch Ihnen musz es eine seltene Wohltat gewesen sein,¹ denn unendlich ist die Kraft, die der Mensch dem Menschen leibt". In a letter to Goethe in October of the same year a similar reference occurs: "Ihnen besonders, als dem freier dastehenden von den beiden, durch den der kranke, zurückgezogene, fast klösterlich lebende Schiller noch in einiger Verbindung mit der Welt gehalten wurde, wird, wer den Genius liebt, tiefen Dank schuldig sein. -- In Schiller selbst ist eine fast geisterhafte Abstraction und Erhebung; doch auch eine schmerzliche Isolirung ausser Ihnen gegenüber lässt sich erkennen: wir könnten ihn uns als einen Prometheus vorstellen, der wohl das Feuer vom Himmel raubt, aber dem die Götter auch als Strafe Ketten und einen nagenden Geier gesandt haben."²

Both as cause and result of this attitude toward Schiller is the fact that in the essay Carlyle's interest is concentrated upon

1. Wilhelm Hertz - "Goethes und Carlyles Briefwechsel" - 112.

2. Ibid. - 122.

Schiller's philosophic performances and his later dramas. There is no evidence of the ardent enthusiasm for the poet's earlier dramas, which is so characteristic of the "Life of Schiller". In the latter production it is the emotional quality of the poet's dramas which appeals to Carlyle, while in the essay this sinks into insignificance before the purely intellectual or philosophic aspect of Schiller's activities.

There is a feeling that Carlyle's view in the essay is somewhat narrow, yet it is impossible not to recognize his ability as a critic in both of his productions on Schiller. As a critic of the German poet he far excelled his contemporaries both in England and Germany. He with his great teacher, Goethe, had come to view literature in its universal aspect. Carlyle has been rightly called one of the greatest interpreters of German literature to the English people.

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